

# Less Than Full Time (LTFT) Training

## Guidance for all postgraduate doctors in training

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### 1. Introduction

- 1.1. HEE is committed to increasingly flexibility in postgraduate medical training. As a part of HEE's work to [Enhance Junior Doctors Working Lives](#) several initiatives have been developed with partners to increase flexibility within Post Graduate Medical Education.
- 1.2. Feedback from doctors in training indicate that many would appreciate the opportunity to pursue a more flexible approach to their training.
- 1.3. All postgraduate doctors in training are able to apply to train Less Than Full Time (LTFT) via their Health Education England (HEE) Local Office. This document has been crafted to provide guidance on the process.

## 2. Background

- 2.1. The junior doctors' contract negotiations which resulted in the 2016 contract in England highlighted wider, non-contractual concerns around flexibility in medical training. Health Education England (HEE) explored innovative solutions and developed new approaches to postgraduate training to improve morale and provide greater flexibility for junior doctors and dentists.
- 2.2. LTFT was previously managed under categories: Category One (disability, ill health and caring responsibilities), Category Two (Unique opportunities for personal professional development, religious commitment or non-medical development).
- 2.3. HEE then developed Category 3, which was supported by the Department of Health & Social Care (DHSC), HEE, NHS Employers, NHS England, the General Medical Council (GMC) and the British Medical Association (BMA) Junior Doctors Committee. This initiative was designed to enhance retention, reduce attrition and improve the working lives of doctors in training by offering an opportunity for improved work-life balance. It allowed doctors in training to choose to train LTFT as a personal choice that meets their individual professional or lifestyle needs.
- 2.4. Following the publication of the [Gold Guide](#) (9<sup>th</sup> Edition, August 2022), the categories previously known as Category One, Category Two and Category Three for LTFT training have been removed. The new simpler process allows **all doctors in training the opportunity to apply to train LTFT for any well-founded reason**, including for their wellbeing or through personal choice.
- 2.5. Current doctors in training who are training LTFT after applying under any of the previous categories will not be impacted by this change. The revised process relates only to new LTFT applications.

## 3. Eligibility for LTFT Training

- 3.1. All employees have a legal right to flexible working, therefore all doctors in training can apply for LTFT training. Section 3.123 of the Gold Guide provides a list of illustrative examples for requesting LTFT training:

Gold Guide Eligibility for LTFT Training:

- I. **Doctors in training with a disability or ill health** – This may include ongoing medical procedures such as fertility treatment.
  - II. **Doctors in training (men and women) with caring responsibilities** (e.g. for children, or for an ill/disabled partner, relative or other dependant)
  - III. **Welfare and wellbeing** – There may be reasons not directly related to disability or ill health where doctors in training may benefit from a reduced working pattern. This could have a beneficial effect on their health and wellbeing (e.g. reducing potential burnout).
  - IV. **Unique opportunities** – A doctor in training is offered a unique opportunity for their own personal/professional development and this will affect their ability to train full time (e.g. training for national/international sporting events, or a short-term extraordinary responsibility such as membership of a national committee or continuing medical research as a bridge to progression in integrated academic training).
  - V. **Religious commitment** – A doctor in training has a religious commitment that involves training for a particular role and requires a specific time commitment resulting in the need to work less than full time.
  - VI. **Non-medical development** – A doctor in training is offered non-medical professional development (e.g. management courses, law courses or fine arts courses) that requires a specific time commitment resulting in the need to work less than full time.
  - VII. **Flexibility for training and career development** with the option to train less than full time with flexibility that might enable development of a broad career portfolio
- 3.2. All well founded reasons will be considered, however support to progress the application may be dependent on the capacity of the programme and/or the effect the request may have on the training available to doctors in training on the programme.

### 3.3. Visa Requirements

3.3.1. LTFT requests for doctors in training who are sponsored by HEE also need to ensure they meet the minimum salary requirements to continue to meet their sponsorship obligations, regardless of whether they hold a Tier 2 visa or Skilled Worker visa. This is set at £20,480 per annum when calculated as a percentage of the going rate. To do this the 'going rate' is based on the basic salary as outlined in the [NHS Medical and Dental \(M&D\) pay scales](#).

3.3.2. A helpful guide, based on the current pay scales as of October 2022 and the minimum hours are set out in the table below:

	<b>Going rate/Basic salary (M&amp;D pay scale)</b>	<b>Minimum hours to meet salary requirement of £20,480 per annum</b>	<b>Salary per annum</b>
<b>FY1</b>	£29,384	70% or 28 hours	£20,569
<b>FY2</b>	£34,012	61% or 24.4 hours	£20,747
<b>CT/ST 1/2</b>	£40,257	51% or 20.4 hours	£20,531
<b>CT3 and ST 3/4/5</b>	£51,017	41% or 16.4 hours	£20,917
<b>ST 6/7/8</b>	£58,398	36% or 14.4 hours	£21,023

3.3.3. Please note that whilst you may be able to reduce your hours to meet sponsorship requirements, LTFT hours will need to be approved by the local HEE Office and/or Trust. For more information on visas please visit here: <https://www.gov.uk/skilled-worker-visa/your-job>

3.3.4. Doctors in training would also be required to complete a [Reporting Form](#) that can be found [here](#), which should be completed after your LTFT is approved and before it commences as we are required to report any changes to your salary and working hours to the Home Office.

### **3.4. Locum Guidance**

- 3.4.1. Any doctors in training approved to train LTFT may undertake periodic locum shifts but must comply with the following guidance and contractual requirements, which can be found [here](#).
- 3.4.2. In accordance with revalidation requirements, all locum work undertaken must be declared on the doctor in training's Form R (Part B). The exception to this is locum work in the unit where the doctor is currently training. Doctors in training who feel pressured to undertake additional locum work should discuss with their Educational Supervisor and Head of School.

### **3.5. Additional Considerations**

- 3.5.1. All doctors in training wish to apply for LTFT should also be aware that:
- Those applying to train LTFT must be aware that their salary will be apportioned in accordance with their contract of employment. Doctors in training are strongly advised to discuss pay and pension arrangements with their employer, to understand the financial impact of LTFT training.
  - Doctors in training who are Out of Programme or undertaking a period of Acting Up are not eligible to apply. LTFT is not available to doctors in training who are out of programme (including acting up) or in the grace period, it only applies to those in approved training posts.
  - Doctors in training who are approved to train LTFT and change specialty (i.e. resign their NTN), will not automatically be eligible to continue training LTFT. A new application to check eligibility is required when transferring to another Training Programme.
  - Doctors in training who are approved to train LTFT and wish to undertake an inter-deanery transfer to Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales will need to discuss their eligibility to train LTFT with their new Deanery.

- It is important to give at least 16 weeks' notice of your wish to train less than full time to allow sufficient time for the employing Trust to be notified and to discuss with the TPD for the purposes of rotation planning.
- Acceptance of your application may be dependent upon and might be limited by service considerations as well as the capacity of the training programme itself.
- It is expected that all those applying due to disability or ill health and caring responsibilities (i and ii above) will be accommodated.
- All LTFT trainees are entitled to an annual allowance **of £1,000**. This allowance is to recognise the relative increased costs of training that doctors training LTFT face as a result of being less than full-time. It is for doctors training LTFT only. It is paid in full and not pro-rated in any way. Contact the HR department in your Trust to ensure this is paid. More information can be found at the following [link](#).
- Doctors who are training LTFT are not able to choose which days and hours they wish to reduce. Working patterns need to be agreed with the employer/host organisation and trainees must be available to work across all shifts and days. For more information on working patterns please reference the LTFT FAQ available on HEE's [website](#).

## 4. Application

- 4.1. Applications should be made to the HEE Local Office (Deanery) and Training Programme Director (TPD). Please contact your local HEE office, the contact details can be found here: <https://www.hee.nhs.uk/our-work/doctors-training/delivering-greater-flexibility>.
- 4.2. Where a request to work LTFT has been rejected the doctor in training has the right to appeal that decision. The doctor in training must follow the appeal process within the local HEE office. Correspondence will be sent to the doctor in training and other stakeholders as necessary to confirm the outcome of the LTFT application, in order that all parties are aware of the decision and can respond accordingly in terms of rotational notification.

## 5. Further information

5.1. For further information please visit our website which includes an FAQ:

<https://www.hee.nhs.uk/our-work/doctors-training/delivering-greater-flexibility>